FIRST SERMONS

Onward ... an Soldiers.

Conscience

A Caution Against Worry. Matt

As A Little Child. Mark

Oct. 8, 1905.

Our text for this afternoon is found in the fifth chapter of St. Matthew, the 13th, 14th, 15th, and 16th verses. "Ye are the salt of the earth: but if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted? it is henceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and trodden under foot of men. Ye are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hid. Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your father which is in heaven."

You are perhaps already aware of the fact that the chosen words are a part of Christ's Sermon on the Mount, or better still, Christ's Gospel of the Kingdom. Verses 2 to 12 inclusive, known as the "Beatitudes," tell us of the Kingdom, what it is, and whose it is. The verses comprising our text treat of "the Kingdom, its relation to

the world; hence the subject of our talk this afternoon is "The Relation of Christ's Kingdom to the World."

What a complex and difficult subject to handle, but Christ's presentation of it is so simple, clear, comprehensive, concise, and yet so grand and sublime! "Ye are the salt of the earth. Ye are the light of the world." Jesus must have understood nature perfectly to be able to choose from her infinite variety of subjects the only two which could possibly express the thought that he wished to convey to his hearers.

Salt suggest the conservative relationship between those of the Kingdom and those outside of the Kingdom; light the liberal element. Let us first consider the Christian's conservative influence in the world.

"Ye are the salt of the earth." This statement implies a high task and great responsibility imposed upon the true follower of Christ. It presupposes society to be corrupt. No one can doubt the truth of the supposition. Social institutions in the time of Christ were bad, those of today are corrupt also. As

long as the cursed saloon is maintained ~~closely~~ with its many body-and-soul destroying forces, and as long as that sacred institution, "the Home", is in such imminent peril of our modern divorce evil, so long will human society be sunken beneath its own pollution and decay. The Christian's influence upon earth should be that of salt upon meat or vegetable material. The putrifaction of meat is retarded by the action of salt upon it. Salt prevents decay and souring. It sweetens and makes wholesome that which is dead. Salt does its work unseen, silently and gradually.

A christian's influence upon earth is that of salt. Does not history prove the statement? When Roman government became so corrupt it could no longer bear its own existance, the ~~christian~~ work of Peter, Paul, and the other disciples made it again bearable. When the Papal See was wallowing in its own mire, and the nations of Europe were stifled with the stench therefrom, Luther salted the earth, purified the atmosphere

and made it possible for a better society to exist. We all know how John Wesley did as much for England.

Every true Christian of today must exercise his saline influence. ~~In this world.~~ Salt tied up in a bag is of no use, nor is a Christian of any use to ~~the~~ world, who keeps away from it altogether. Wherever there is corruption, be it political, social or otherwise, there should a Christian's work be going on. ~~Church members should not only be~~ a people of decency ~~but a people working for decency.~~

Church-going people should not only be the better element of a community, but they should be striving to make their community consist of best one element, the very best possible.

"But if the salt have lost its savor, wherewith shall it be salted?" Can salt lose its strength? Can a Christian lose his saline influence? The answer to both questions is "yes." Salt exposed to the dampness of the air becomes unfit for use. It retains its crystalline form, but has no saltiness. strength That Christian who submits to worldly ~~influence~~ sway becomes powerless as far as being able to salt the earth is concerned. One reason why the

church is not exerting more influence for good than it does is because so many of its members have become saltless Christians. The saltless salt must be resalted. Saltless christians must be refilled with the Holy Spirit of God. Our time and age is becoming ripe for another pentacostal wave of the Holy Spirit. Dear ones, let us pray for it earnestly.

"it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out and to be trodden under foot of men." These words pronounce the doom of the backslider, the knell of the saltless Christians hope. Are we losing our christian saltiness? then let us go to our Father and ask Him for a renewal of strength. Are we salt-christians? then let us exercise our God-given ~~influence~~ power at all times and in all places!

Now let us consider the liberal relationship existing between the citizens and aliens of the Kingdom. "We turn back to the 1st chapter of Genesis, verses 3, 4, and read, "And God said, let there be light, and there was light; and God saw the light that it was good. How abundantly has God given us light! The diffusion of light in such pro-

fusion is one of God's great blessings to mankind. Those of you who have studied the subject at all must know that it is light which makes it possible for every form of life to exist. The beautiful trees, the fragrant flowers, the plants and grasses, and the fishes, the birds, and the animals all depend ~~stand~~ used upon light. Its most marked characteristic is its giving and spending qualities. The liberality of light!

"Ye are the light of the world." I need not say that Christ is the light of the world. Our blessed Lord is the World's redeemer. Just as the universe was in utter darkness before God created light, so this sinful world was in utter darkness before Christ came. Jesus brought us life, hope, and love — Christ, the light of the world! But our text says "ye are the light of the world." Ye refers to Christ's disciples, to his true followers, to you and me who are trying to walk in His footsteps. In John 15, 4 our Lord speaks thus, "Abide in me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself except it abide in the vine, no more can ye except ye abide in me."

Therefore we who abide in Christ Jesus are the light of the world even as He is the

light: ~~of the~~

Bear in mind, "Ye are the light." not, "Ye carry the light." We are so apt to think of this light as an abstract quality. Just as Jesus Christ is our Personal Savour, so are we the light of the world, personally. We are a personal part of the light of the world. Jesus, our Lord and Master, should be the and is the vitality of our Christian lives; and we in Him should vitalize the world which is in darkness.

What a responsibility rests upon us Christians! The well-worn but not worn out expression, "Christians are the world's Bible" contains a profound truth. "A city set on a hill cannot be hid." Thank God, the city of the Christian is set on a hill, and can be seen by the whole world. The entire world is watching us constantly, ready, it is true, to pick us to pieces, if our lights are not shining brightly, but nevertheless, glad to receive from us the light, for it is the only light the poor world has with which to grope its way along from one age to another. If we have the true

light of God, we need not make a loud noise ~~that that~~ in order to acquaint the world with the fact. We in Christ and He in us are enough to shake the world without any noise, for our light is radiant and radiating at all times and on all occasions. As the action of salt is hidden, silent and gradual so also is the action of light.

"Neither do men light a candle and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick; and it giveth light unto all that are in the house." How many Christians today are afraid to let their light shine out and around that others might see. How often do we put our candles under a bushel! Once in a very great while we may meet with some Christian who is ostentatious in his manner, who tries to let every body know that he is not only a light for Christ but the light. But for every one who makes a show of himself there are a hundred or more who deliberately hide their candles under a bushel.

"I can't sing, I can't pray, I can't talk, or I can't lead a meeting, are some of the ways of ~~placing~~ hiding the light. This is not modesty on the part of those who thus hide within themselves

it is an unnatural self-consciousness that ought to be overcome. The ~~earnest~~ light-giving Christian never crushes an impulse to do good or to speak a word for the Master. Self is entirely cast aside, for Christ abides in him, and his light must shine for the world.

"Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven." Observe carefully that it is "your good works" that must be seen by them, and not you. You must be hidden from view. There is no "big I" in the christian's vocabulary. Self must be laid upon the altar. Our lives must be given to the Lord. "The glory and honor and dominion forever belongs to God and not to man. "He that loseth his life for my sake, 'said the Master, 'shall find it."

Note: let us draw a conclusion from our lesson. We have seen wherein we, as christians, are related to the world. Upon us rests the responsibility of cleansing, purifying and preserving human society in all of its wickedness. Our light, which is the light of Jesus Christ in us, shining

forth in good works, in helpful deeds, in kind words, must dispell the darkness of the world. The salvation of the world is in our hands. In order to have the necessary strength, ~~the~~ courage, ~~the~~ hope ~~the~~ endurance, ~~the~~ faith and ~~the~~ love with which to meet our great responsibility, we must abide in Christ. We must pray unceasingly. From God the Father, cometh all blessings. "Rejoice and be exceeding glad, for great is your reward in heaven.

Amen.

Mrs. H. S. Ingle

The Influence of Jesus in the World